

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8819

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 12146

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR

SUBJECT: UN MIDDLE EAST EMERGENCY FORCE

SUMMARY. THINK IT UNLIKELY THAT GOP WOULD WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN UN MID EAST FORCE, ALTHOUGH IT MIGHT BE RESPONSIVE TO REQUEST IF IT CLEARLY REPRESENTED WISHES OF ARABS AS WELL AS ISRAEL. PARTICIPATION IN ANY EVENT LIMITED IN VIEW MARTIAL LAW/INSURGENCY DEMANDS ON AFP. END SUMMARY.

1. ALTHOUGH GOP HAS TRADITIONALLY BEEN FRIENDLY WITH ISRAEL, IT HAS BECOME EXCEPTIONALLY SENSITIVE TO INTERESTS OF ARABS IN RECENT MONTHS. MUSLIM INSURGENCY HAS GONE ON FOR ONE YEAR IN THE SOUTH ABETTED BY SOME ARAB COUNTRIES, AND GOP IS NOW ACTIVELY SEEKING TO GENERATE GOODWILL IN MUSLIM WORLD TO HELP BRING PEACE TO MINDANAO. ALSO, GOP HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY CONSCIOUS OF ITS NEED FOR OIL. AT OUTBREAK OF FIGHTING IN THE MIDDLE EAST, GOP ANNOUNCED ITS NEUTRALITY, BUT SIGNIFICANTLY POINTING OUT THAT 78 PERCENT OF ITS OIL CAME FROM THE MID-EAST.

2. GOP EXPERIENCE WITH PHILCAG IN VIETNAM IS NOT PARALLEL
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BUT HAS LEFT A VERY BAD TASTE WITH PHILS (AND PERHAPS WITH

US) IN TERMS OF SENDING MILITARY FORCES ABROAD.

3. IN ADDITION TO FIGHTING INSURGENCY IN THE SOUTH, AFP UNITS ARE ALSO TIED DOWN IN EFFORT TO CONTAIN INSURGENCY OF COMMUNIST NEW PEOPLES ARMY IN THE NORTH AND TO ACT AS GUARANTORS OF MARTIAL LAW IN MANILA. AFP RESOURCES ARE CONSEQUENTLY STRETCHED VERY THIN. IT SEEMS UNLIKELY TO US THAT PHILIPPINES WOULD BE IN POSITION TO RELEASE MORE THAN ONE OR TWO COMPANIES EVEN IF IT WISHED TO PARTICIPATE IN UN FORCE.

4. DESPITE NEGATIVE FACTORS LISTED ABOVE, GOP MIGHT BE PREPARED TO CONSIDER REQUEST FOR FORCES PROVIDED IT WAS MADE CLEAR THAT ARAB COUNTRIES AS WELL AS ISRAEL WISHED GOP PARTICIPATION. AMBIGUITY ON THIS POINT OR INDICATIONS THAT ONLY ISRAEL WISHED GOP PARTICIPATION WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY SQUELCH ANY POSSIBLE GOP INTEREST IN PARTICIPATION.

5. SHOULD GOP PARTICIPATION BE SOUGHT, EMBASSY BELIEVES IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT US NOT REPEAT NOT GET OUT IN FRONT. OTHER COUNTRIES SHOULD TAKE LEAD IN SOLICITING SO THAT PHILIPPINE DECISION WOULD BE ON ITS OWN, PRO - OR CON -, AND NOT BECOME AN ELEMENT IN US-PHILIPPINE BILATERAL RELATIONS.

6. IMPOSSIBLE IDENTIFY KIND OF UNITS GOP COULD MAKE AVAILABLE VIEW EXTENSIVE AFP COMMITMENTS TO MARTIAL LAW/ INSURGENCY. GOP HAS THREE L-100S WHICH IT COULD USE, ALTHOUGH IT WOULD PRESUMABLY BE GLAD ACCEPT UN (INCLUDING US) TRANSPORT IF BEING USED BY OTHER PARTICIPANTS.
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